3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

are increasing in numbers. The average number of children reared in one family may be from three to four. The number of children born by one woman is not low; women with ten children are no exception. But as a rule no more than three or four children grow up to maturity in one family, the rest dying from want of reasonable nursing. If in course of time the natives are taught to take better care of their children, the population will no doubt strongly increase. A cause of the low birth rate in many families is the fact that a man is not supposed to have intercourse with his wife while a baby is nursing, that is, till the baby is from two to two and a half years old. They consider it a great shame for a woman to become pregnant before this time has elapsed. If such a case happens, they generally will say that the woman has committed adultery.

OUTWARD APPEARANCE OF THE PEOPLE

The Shilluks are tall in figure, the average height of the men being nearly 1.80 m.[1] They are generally lean, rather narrow in the shoulders, and have but thin calves; their arms and legs are long, especially the legs below the knees and the forearms; hands and feet are small. A characteristic posture of the Shilluk man is to stand on one leg, and bending the other, press the sole of his foot against the inner surface of the knee, while one hand holds a spear stuck into the ground; he will stand thus for hours, looking admiringly at his cattle. They are very clever in running and jumping, and are capable of sustaining considerable fatigue.

Their skin is dark, almost black; albinoes seem to be rare. The physical appearance of the Shilluks is not that of pure negroes, they might rather be called negroids, in spite of their dark colour. Most of them have a fierce, sometimes a proud, haughty look. The cheek-bones and lips are protruding, but not excessively; the nose is flat, but high noses are not infrequent. Young people of both sexes are finely built, while in old age they generally become very thin and bony. Their gait is erect and elastic.

PAINTING THE BODY

What makes the Shilluks look most ugly and almost frightful in the eyes of a newcomer, is their habit of smearing the whole body. While the lower part is covered with ashes, the breast and head are painted with red earth or with chalk, or, if they can afford it, with oil or butter. Sometimes the whole body is painted white or red, and lines or figures are drawn across the face.

EXTRACTION OF INCISORS

Like most Nilotic negroes the Shilluk remove the lower incisors; this is done in early childhood; its omission would, in the belief of the natives, cause sickness; for instance, a case occurred where the teeth were taken out to cure sore eyes; a woman who had just had them removed from her child, said that unless they were taken out, her child would undoubtedly be deformed in some way, when it grew to maturity. Another explanation for extracting the theeth

[1] five feet ten inches.

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

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[565]

is, that this will keep them from using abusive language. — Some natives say, members of the royal family do not remove the lashes; but of this I am not sure.

[641] [413] TRIBAL MARKS

The tribal marks of the Shilluks, women as well as men, are from three to five rows of dots across the forehead. The regular instrument for tattooing these dots into the skin is a crude iron similar in shape to our scalpel. But not infrequently individuals are met with who have not these marks. Sometimes women have from one to three rows of small scars across their foreheads. These are in most or all cases simply caused by wearing bands of buttons drawn tightly across the forehead. Tattoo-ings on other parts of the body are seldom.

302 413 SHAVING

The women wear either no or only short hair on the head; they shave their heads with a razor consisting of a straight piece of thin iron, whose edge is sharpened, or with a short piece of iron with one side beaten out to a thin edge. But lacking a razor they use almost any metal instrument they can get hold of for this purpose. Both sexes scrupulously remove any hair on the body by pulling it out with a kind of pincers; the men even pull out their beard and eyelashes. — They do not circumcise.

●302 HAIR-DRESSINGS

The men, chiefly youths, indulge in elaborate hair-dresses of varied forms. Such hair-dressing takes several hours to arrange, and has to last for weeks, the natural occasion for renewing it being a village-dance, where everyone wants to appear at his best; in dressing it, the hair is first loosened with a stick, which serves at the same time for scratching the head. Then it is twisted and brought into the right form by means of a mixture of gum, mud, and sometimes cow-dung; from time to time oil or butter is poured on it. In order not to spoil the hair-dressings while sleeping, the neck is supported by neck-supports.

[352 513]

Sometimes the hair is bleached either yellowish-red or grey. Bleached hair is generally not twisted or dressed, but is left standing out in all directions "like the feathers of a fighting cock." Bleaching is done by smearing a thick plaster of ashes, chalk and cow-dung on the hair and leaving it there for about two or three weeks. Another mode of bleaching is to rub the plaster well into the hair, then gathering it up from the back, and bringing it forward, forming it into the shape of a horn. While in this state, they must be very careful not to break it, lest the hair is broken off. The same result is obtained by washing the hair continually with cow-urine. These processes take the kink as well as the colour out of the hair. This bleached bristle-like hair together with their tall, thin body covered with ashes or brick-dust, and the want of eyelashes sometimes give the people, in the eyes of one who has never seen them before, a rather frightful appearance. Boys wear their hair in little knobs, flavoured with red earth and fat. Cowrie-shells, in strings or single, are often twisted into the hair, and

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[801]

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

301 young men are very fond of adorning their hair with ostrich or other fine feathers.

291 The men and generally also unmarried girls go naked. In recent times many men wear a cotton cloth, which is knotted on the left shoulder, and slung round the right hip; chiefly people living near the mission have partly adopted this clothing; the desire to possess such a cotton-cloth is a stimulus for many a Shilluk to work for a few days or weeks in the mission-compound; the number of those who do so is apparently increasing. Animal-skins are generally not worn by men as an every-day dress. Women, and sometimes girls are dressed in cow, calf, or antelope skins, which are either wrapped round the body, or hung over the shoulder. CLOTHING AND ORNAMENTS

[461]

[The full dress of a woman is described by Mrs. Giffen in "The Egyptian Sudan" as follows: First of all there is a small apron. This is a piece of coarse cloth — originally white — about two feet long and eighteen inches wide. It is made of two thicknesses, and it is tied by strings fastened to two corners around the waist, but just below the abdomen, and falls down to the knees.

Then there are two skins, of sheep, goat, calf, gazelle or whatever it may be, tanned with the hair on, and worn with the hair side out. One of these is tied around the waist, using one foreleg and one hindleg of the skin for strings to tie with. The tail and the other two legs — or the skin of them — dangle and flap around the legs as ornaments. Indeed these are sometimes ornamented with beads, brass or iron rings. This skin is tied in front so as to show the white apron underneath.

The other skin is worn on the upper part of the body. The fore and hind legs on one side are fastened together at their very tips; this is then slipped over the head, the legs of the skin thus tied together resting on the right shoulder, and the other side passing under the left arm. This is the full dress of a woman. Of course in addition to this they may wear as many beads and other ornaments as they can afford; strings of beads around the waist, neck, and arms, and armlets, of brass; sometimes as many as ten or twelve brass or iron rings, weighing several pounds, and extending from the hand half way to the elbow. These are not loose, but drawn tight to the flesh, and each made fast by the blacksmith. Similar rings of iron are often worn by the older women on the ankle. These are very heavy and produce great knots in the flesh.

[301]

292 The little girls wear the apron only, and when a little older, put on the shoulder skin, and when full grown wear the skin about the waist.]

[535] [301] When meeting for a dance both sexes are richly dressed. While present at

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

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a great dance. I have noted the ornaments and clothings worn by the young men and girls on the occasion. They are *a)* for the men: above the ankles a strip of sheep or goat skin with the hair on it outside; the same just below the knee; above it are the knee-bells, a number of metal bells each consisting in a hollow, oblong piece of iron, in which a small iron ball moves, thus producing a rattling noise; about the loins there is a skin of leopard, gepard, wild cat, or jackal, suspended on a eight to twelve-fold girdle of ostrich egg shells; the girdle may also consist of European beads; on the wrist a bracelet of brass or iron, above the elbow an ivory ring, above it a six- to eight-fold ring of ambach; about the neck they wear one or more necklaces of beads; on the head ornaments of horse-tail or other long hair, and ostrich feathers; round the forehead stripes of red or white bristles are fastened; each man holds two lances, two clubs, one club-shield, the lances generally being adorned with ostrich-plumes; sometimes the skin-cloth round the waist is adorned with bells or iron chains. Face, arms, and the upper part of the body are smeared with red earth, over wich melted butter is poured and stripes of ashes are drawn. Several, if not all, of the dancers carry a dancing-stick, a long stick, bent at its upper end like the handle of a walking stick, and covered with brass or some other metal. *b)* The girls present the following appearance: above the ankles a bundle of heavy iron rings, on the loins a large antelope- or more frequently calf-skin suspended by a bundle of ostrich egg shell chains; round the neck and hanging down on the breasts a large bundle of blue or green beads; on the wrists bracelets of beads; round the forehead a string of beads; the hair is sometimes dressed on the occasion; in the hair an ostrich or some other good feather is stuck, in one or two cases I saw even flowers instead of a feather; the girls are not painted, only anointed with oil.

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The most characteristic adornments of the men are thick, heavy bracelets and armlets of iron, brass, ivory, twisted ambach, tree-bark, and cowrie shells. A wreath consisting of a strip of skin with the hair on the outside is laid round the head. Rings of metal, ambach, cowrie or bark are worn above the ankle. Women and girls also wear armlets, but not ivory ones. The legs below the knee are loaded with heavy metal rings. Men as well as women, but chiefly the latter, pierce their ears at the top, and wear rings of brass or iron in them; sometimes merely a piece of metal or a stick is fastened in them. Both sexes wear strings of ostrich egg shells about the loins; besides these chains of cowries, of river shells, of leather, and of varied beads are frequent. Many grown-up men and youths wear a necklace of a peculiar kind of small, well-shaped, and marble-like stones, which have about the size of a pigeon-egg; they are very much valued, and the natives always ask an ox in exchange for them. These

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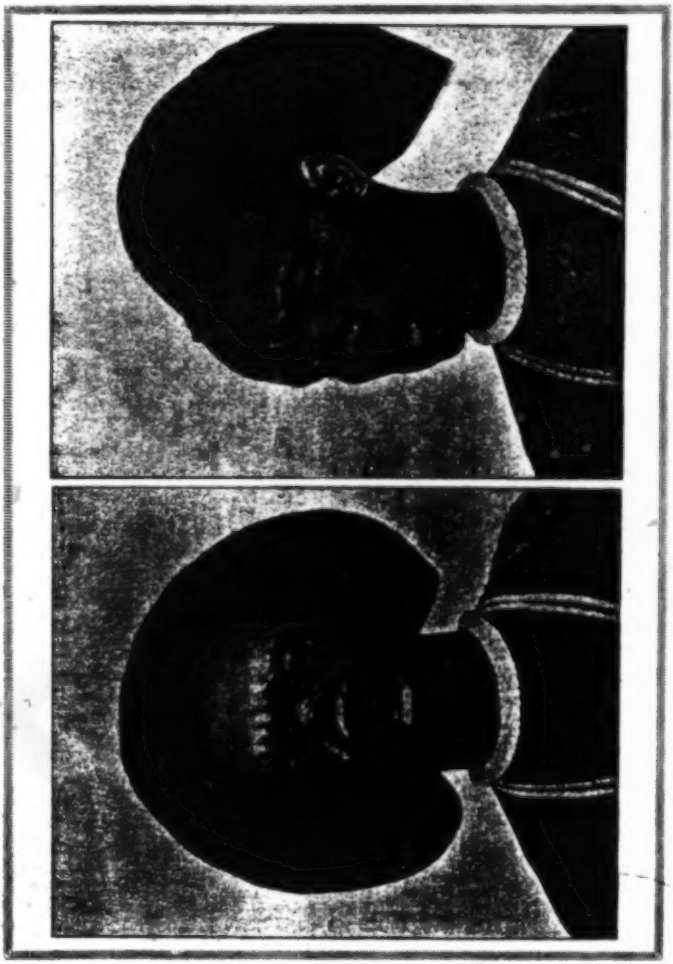

A Typical Shilluk, showing head dress

[FACING p. xxxii]

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

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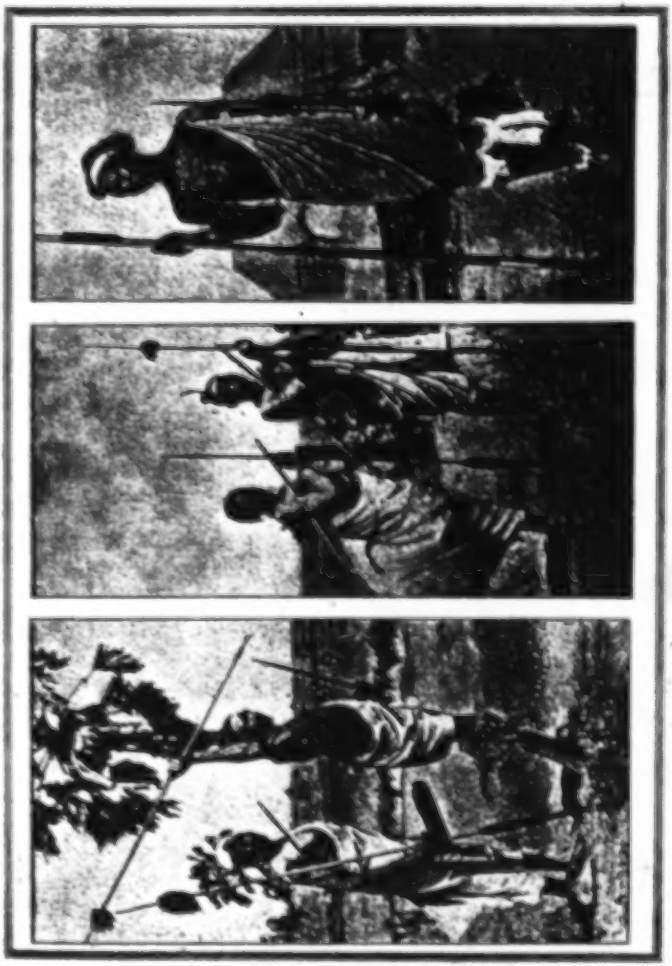
1. Shilluk Girls showing the way they wear the skin dress
2. Lotus flower along the Sobat River

[FACING p. XLVIII (A)]



A Shilluk Warrior wielding a spear and a club; below him strips of sheep skin. Note the tattings on the breast

Two men in arms

Shilluk Women in arms for a mock-fight, carrying clubs, spears and a "dabshield"

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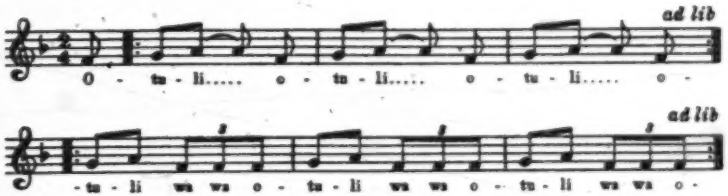
[FACING p. LVI]

7:Tucker E-5 (1929-1933) 1933 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23
Bari FJ5
Acholi FK4
Lotuko FJ17
Azande F07

S 524 533 539 797 609 302

This game is definitely a hit at the white man. The "chin of a goat" in the first song refers to the beards of the R.C. missionaries (beards being considered unseemly among the Nilotic tribes); while the kicking in the second song is thought to be a skit on the average official's use of his boots when angry or impatient.

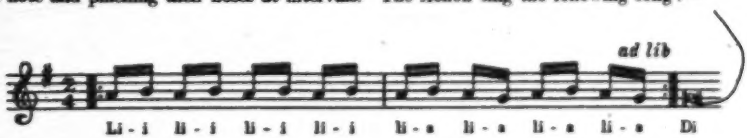
19. *Holding one's Breath.*—A much more popular line game among all tribes is that of holding one's breath for a certain period. The Shilluk play it as follows. The boys line up in two ranks as if for "Nuts and May." One boy on one side places the tips of the fingers of one hand on top of his head, takes a deep breath, and proceeds to walk briskly round the other line of boys and back to his own place, chanting in step:—

S 524

S [533 539]

without drawing breath until he gets back. If he chokes or his voice catches, the rest chase after him and pinch his arms. The boys go out alternately from each side in turn, but one boy need not wait till his neighbour is in before setting out himself. If too many boys get back safely, the lines withdraw till a greater distance separates them.

Not all tribes sing for this game. The Bari and Latuko merely march round humming on one note and pinching their noses at intervals. The Acholi sing the following song:—

B L 524



Ac 524 533 539

the "Di . . ." being protracted until the boy is back in his place.

IMITATIONS OF ANIMALS, ETC.

Az 524

Though really coming under a different category, the following few games are included here by virtue of their songs:—

20. *Bush-buck in a Trap.* (See Figs. 5 and 6, Pl. XVI.) This game is played by the Azande, and its success depends entirely on how the principal player can imitate the animal's movements. The boys stand in a ring, holding hands. One boy is in the middle, and he is "Gbodi,"

The natives weave their hair into fantastic shapes. If a person has very fine hair, he puts a few thorns in it to keep off the evil eye. Should the evil eye fall on his hair, his head would break out in sores.

When a person has his body well oiled or covered with some fine ashes, he is very likely to have the evil eye cast on him. To escape that misfortune he takes a cucumber like pod from a wild plant, and takes out the seeds. Some of the seeds are put on the temples, and some on the neck, and others on the tip of the shoulder blade, or the entire fruit may be worn suspended from the neck.

When butter is boiled to clarify it, the work is usually done at night so that the evil eye may not be cast on it.

The Shilluks will not say that they are in good circumstances, lest it be heard by some envious person, and he should cast the evil eye on their possessions. When a rich man is asked in regard to his property, he usually says I have one or two cows, but they are very poor cows.

The parents of a very fine looking child do not like to let people see it for fear someone will cast the evil eye on it, and the parent is very angry when someone comments on the good appearance of the child. Should the child be taken sick, the parents call on the person who made the remark, and demand that he pay the fine required when a person is killed. The accused usually holds out, and a compromise is affected. He brings a sheep, and one of its ears is cut off. The sheep then is a witness against the man, and by doing that, he assumes the responsibility for the child. If it dies, he pays the fine as though he had killed it. Even if the child reaches maturity and dies, the man is responsible and must pay the fine.

Frequently people have hard knots in their flesh. These are really stones that have been put there by someone with the evil eye. The swellings do not disappear.

The Shilluks have a custom that when a person is threshing his grain, they go to beg from him. Sometimes they go in such numbers that the man has very little left for himself, but he does not dare to refuse for fear someone in the party may cast the evil eye on him. He gets even by going to beg from some other person.

They give a few warnings as to conduct when with a person who has the evil eye.

11: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918)1919 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

683 754 pay a fine unless he has caught the man actually working a charm. The accused says: «Whom have I injured in your house?». He does not try to plead that he is innocent of such work, but only that he has not injured his accuser.

754f The malignant medicine man has many means of bringing disaster to people. If he is able to get a bit of hair, the parings of the nails, spittle or any thing else that has been part of the body, or the clothing of the body, he can work a charm on it, so that the owner will die. If he is ignorant of the identity of the owner, he can do nothing with these things. For that reason, when a man cuts his hair or his nails, he either hides the [302] part removed or else puts it on a public road, so that the identity of the owner can not be learned.

A case that illustrated their belief in that power occurred here once. One afternoon a man came in great wrath with his daughter. He said someone on the place had killed his daughter that morning. As she seemed to be in good health, his statement seemed to be a little ridiculous. When asked to explain, he said that she had been carrying water, and that she had laid off her outer garment which was of calf skin. When she returned to get her garment, she found that someone had cut a piece out of it. We was sure a man with the occult power to kill had done the deed. When examined the edge of the marred place was seen to be rough. Others, who had been working were called to see if the identity of the person doing the wrong could be ascertained. At last a boy said that he had seen two pups playing with the skin and dragging it about. He had driven them away, and returned it to its place. The man was satisfied that harm had not been intended against his daughter, and she returned to work.

Over a bit of mud taken from the wall of a house, or a bit of grass from the roof, a charm can be worked that will kill the owner of the house.

When a man's club falls into the hands of one of these evil men, he buries it, which is symbolical of the burial of the owner which will soon occur, or he may kill the man by cutting the club in two, or a hoe may be given to him by the children while the older people are away. He throws the hoe into the river, and the arm of the owner is destroyed so that he can not hoe. He may also steal a cow rope or a spear and work a charm on it that will kill the owner.

Many things are denied to the young man who has not been properly initiated. He cannot take part in the formal dances, though he may join in the moonlight dances of the children. He is debarred from that pursuit so dear to the heart of the small boy, that is, he is not permitted to go to their tribal fights. However, he enjoys immunity from danger in these fights, as women and boys who have not danced are placed in the same class; it is a disgrace to kill them. In the few cases that I have known of small lads being killed, the ones who did the killing insisted that it was a mistake—that either the weapon had miscarried or they had mistaken the lad for someone else. Some timid lads may delay their initiation through fear, but to the majority it is a challenge to claim the full rights of men. The boy who has not danced is not permitted to wear the large necklaces made from the heavy hairs of the giraffe tail. He may wear a band of a few hairs, but the large ones called win are forbidden to him. He is also forbidden to wear the rek, the beads made from the eggshell of the ostrich. He is not permitted to use "ajǭño" on his hair. This is a brick-like substance made by taking the cleaning from the floor of the stable in the morning, and then dried cow dung is put with it, and the resulting mixture is made into a loaf and burned with cow dung. It has a brick-like appearance when finished. It is then powdered. The young man puts oil on his head. The dust is poured on his head, and he keeps shaking his head to get it to form little balls. Other red preparations for the head may be used by the small boys. The lad who has not danced is not permitted to wear the skins of the various members of the cat tribe that the men wear at fights and dances. Finally, he is not permitted to make a formal call on the young ladies until after he has danced, and he is not granted any political rights in the village council.

The ages at the time of initiation vary. A strong lad is initiated at an earlier age than a weakling. The older men say that boys dance at an earlier age than they did formerly. The average age now is perhaps fifteen years. Some of the older men say it used to be at least twenty years. When all the older males in a family are dead a boy may be initiated younger so that he can inherit the property of his father, and also to give the family representation in the civic life of the village. Initiations may occur at both the spring and autumn dances. Those initiated the same year have a feeling of relationship for others of the same

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

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ANEI KUR, RETH OF THE SHILLUK.

[FACING P. 7]

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944)1946
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

6. *Costumes.* All the warriors wore "war paint", their faces smeared with red, a mixture of brick dust and oil. Hair wigs and feather crests were worn by most men, including chiefs, who had no elaborate head-dresses of their own hair. Skins were worn as well as cloth. Leopard skins were worn, largely by wives of the late *reth*, and by *kwa reth* and chiefs, and the skins of the Mrs. Gray antelope and cob by those to whom they had been presented by Fafiti. An interesting feature was the senior wife, who was clad in the deceased's clothes, his special cloak (*lau*), cummerbund, and sash, and the Scottish International Rugby cap which had been presented to Fafiti by Mr. P. Munro. The cap had aged a lot in the last few years, but has established itself as part of the regalia, and the new *reth* requested that a substitute be found for him for the ceremonies.

NOTES TO PART 3

7. The *reth* could not start without *nyakwer*. Her status and significance are discussed in the text of the fourth day's ceremonies. It is possible that the lateness of the Kwa Okel was due to a conventional reluctance to produce the girl.

8. Important personages in the ceremony, and female relatives of the *reth* or attendants of Nyikang wore the skins of female Mrs. Gray antelope. The *reth* himself wore one on the last two days of the ceremony. The chief of Gol Nyikang was observed on the morning of the first day's ceremonies wearing a black skin of the male Mrs. Gray. He soon changed to a female skin.

9. The *reth* was on a journey, and these were his attendants and his luggage. Nyikang had a similar retinue.

10. The *reth's* sacred shield is a counterpart to that of Nyikang; like Nyikang's shield it should have been brought from Fashoda, but at the last moment it was forgotten.

11. The Kwa Otwot may originally have been a clan which has now died out. The prefix indicates an agnatic kinship group. They

533 destroyed, Yor son of Nyidhongo, the country is ruined," is one of the main
537 refrains of the song of Yor. Other songs refer to the immortality of their
766 *reths*. Of Dak, son of Nyikang, we hear that he only vanished, he did not die.
[775] Of Kweikon, who was killed in battle against the Dervishes at Jebel Gadir,
they sing, *Kurjang* (Kweikon) *cie keny aboi tho nyiwang kecdi tho wadi nimi,*
[173] " Kurjang the fierce one, when he went out to die he did not fear, fierce one,
death is only sleeping."

766 Warriors from the surrounding settlement of Fanyidwai Pac then entered
in battle order, carrying their shields and spears. After a preliminary march
[576] round the arena, spears and shields were discarded and only sticks and millet
stalks carried. This is usual at Shilluk public ceremonies. Dances continued
for three days, men of Fanyikang, Dettim, Fakang and Malakal attended
and the procedure was not different. Over two hundred and eighty oxen
were slaughtered for the occasion, the tails and some of the horns being hung
on the fence surrounding the tomb, while the meat was consumed by the
participants.

[783] On the final day, after a great show of dancing and further sacrifices, the
ceremony of purification known as *dungo* (or *Yul*) took place. The *bangreth*,
nyireth and also many other kinsmen of the late *reth* were conducted by the
ororo into the centre of the village, where an ox was sacrificed while they sat
round in the centre. According to strict Shilluk custom, this should have
[177] been followed by a general shaving of heads. In fact, they did not do so,
302 possibly because the ritual bathing in the river was considered sufficient
purification. No satisfactory explanation for this deviation from custom was
forthcoming. It is worth mentioning also that the *ohak nam*, latrine, and the
bilo (or *gol pi*) bath place, of the late *reth*, which are attached to the *gol dwong*
and used by him in the past, were fenced off and guarded. Anyone approach-
ing them was seized by the *ororo* and made to pay a small forfeit.

643 The *reth*-elect, Kur *wad* Fafiti, was present on the first day of the *wowo*,
766 as a gesture of respect to his predecessor, for it is not necessary for the new
reth to be there and he never appears in public. In particular he may not
see the relics of Nyikang carried by the *kwa* Nyikir, for these are associated
with the death and burial of a *reth*, not with the living.

766 The *kwa* Nyikir then set out for Debwor where a similar ceremony was
to be held for the northern Shilluk. I was not myself present and am
indebted to Mr. J. L. Baker for the following account.

" On November 21st, the *ororo* and *kwa* Nyikir had returned to Fashoda
for the final act in the obsequies of *reth* Dak and arrived there after several
days spent on the road. At about 4 p.m., as at Kujo where the actual bodily

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

of frenzied barking, as all the mongrels in the place, suddenly galvanized into life at the appearance of a stranger, give tongue to their displeasure and make a concerted rush with the evident intention of tearing me to pieces. I shout to one or two youths loitering near and ask them to call off the dogs, but to no avail, so I seize a stick and get in a telling smack or two on some which have ventured too near, and disperse the rest with a few well-aimed lumps of cotton soil. They retreat to a safe distance barking and growling threateningly, but at least I can make my way into the village in peace. There is little astir; a few men squat near the cow byre gossiping while one lies prostrate on the ground with the village hairdresser anointing his hair with a mixture of red mud, oil and ashes as a preparation for building it up into an elaborate coiffure. Most of the women have not yet returned from their daily trudge to the river for water, but the spirals of smoke rising from behind the reed fences which surround the individual homesteads indicate that some of the more industrious housewives have already begun to prepare the morning meal. A group of small children, pot-bellied and large-eyed, soon run to surround the Father and his bicycle; gravely they scrutinize him and his mount while some shyly offer him the customary Shilluk greeting, '*Yi bi*—You have come'. The bolder spirits among them venture to come closer to investigate the wonder of his wrist watch, putting their ears against it to hear its ticking with smiles of amazement and delight.

The children follow the priest as he wheels his cycle across the open space to where the knot of idlers is sitting near the cattle byre. The village chief who is among them rises courteously to greet the white man; '*Jal duong*,' he says, '*Yi nin*: Great one, you have slept.' I answer him in accustomed fashion, '*Yi nut*: You are here,' and then each man of the group greets me separately and receives his answer. I seat myself in the place of honour on the chief's mat and smoke a cigarette with him, discussing the prospects of the crops and making enquiries about certain ones in whom I am interested. Soon I excuse myself and go off in search of my

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

For dress both sexes wear a length of cotton cloth knotted 291
on one shoulder, the left of a man, and the right of a woman, and falling to the knees. These cloths when new are a dazzling white, but they soon lose all semblance of their original purity. The male Shilluk favours red, and steeps his [386]
cloth in a dye made from brick dust which produces a russet hue; the female, alas, prefers to soak her cloth in oil which turns her lovely white robe into a dingy, evil-smelling clout.

'In the Spring,' sings the poet, 'a young man's fancy 832
lightly turns to thoughts of love,' and this is no less true of 302
the Shilluk youth than it is of his brother of any other race or clime. A Shilluk gallant seeking to captivate a maiden's heart is indeed a sight to see; his cloth is dyed the deepest red; his spear-blade glitters and its six-foot shaft is smooth and polished; his face is painted red and white (and in other colours, too, if he has a friend or relation who has access to the school chalk-box), with the beads of flesh across his brow pricked out in contrasting colours; he is loaded down with [301]
ropes of beads, dangling ear-rings, bracelets and anklets, so that he clanks along like a tank engine. But the most astonishing feature of his get-up is his hair. No fashionable hairdresser at home can teach the Shilluk anything about hair-styles. Nature has given him but a sparse thatch of thin, kinky hair, yet with this he produces the most amazing results. If he decides to go in for the soup-plate style, he waits until his hair has grown to a reasonable length and then puts himself in the hands of the local hairdresser who treats his locks with a mixture of mud, oil, ashes and other less pleasing ingredients before moulding them into discs on each side of the head, teasing the hair into minute curls. Sometimes the barber will shave the top of the head bare, but occasionally he will treat it with red mud and knead it into small balls like cherries, or shape it like a cock's comb or something equally fantastic. A youth who adopts this hair-style may keep it long after his courting days are over and he has settled down as a sedate husband, and in this case the two side discs, reinforced from time to time with extra supplies

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832 of mud, assume enormous proportions, becoming rather like
302 the wide ears of an elephant. When they become too cumbersome he tires of them and has them cut off; he may then adopt another style, but as a rule the fires of youth have by this died down and he is content to leave his hair in its natural state.

302 Other highly esteemed hair-styles are the 'Cherry Pie', when the hair all over the head is moulded tightly into little red balls; the 'Cock's Comb' extending in a raised ridge from the crown of the head to the forehead while the rest is shaven, and the 'Hat Brush'. One day my houseboy appeared before my startled eyes with his head clean shaven save for a long elliptical patch of hair which he had dyed (with, I suspected, the Sisters' laundry blue) a brilliant blue colour. Again, a brave will sometimes scorn all such fripperies, and shave his head completely, polish it with oil and bind a string of flat blue beads around his forehead, achieving the effect of a decorated chocolate Easter egg.

562 As is usual in the East it is the male who wears the fine plumage while the female is subdued, if not indeed drab, in her colouring. A Shilluk girl makes no attempt to imitate
[291] the gorgeous decoration of her brother; her dirty grey cloth
[531] she may hem with an embroidered pattern in beads, and she may bedeck also with coloured beads the little apron she wears around her waist, but apart from a string of beads
[301] around her neck or arm and an iron or copper bangle, that is the only finery she will allow herself. She rarely paints
[302] her face or dresses her hair. On the occasion of a dance
[292] she will change her everyday cloth for a blue one or a mantle of deer skin, anoint her shaven head with oil and trick herself out with a few more beads, and having gone as far as fashion allows will rely upon personal charm to win her admirers.

174 The origins of the Shilluk people are not known with any
[197] degree of certainty. It would seem from their affinity, especially in language, with the Jur tribe of the Southern Sudan and with the Luo of the Bahr-el-Gazal and Kenya

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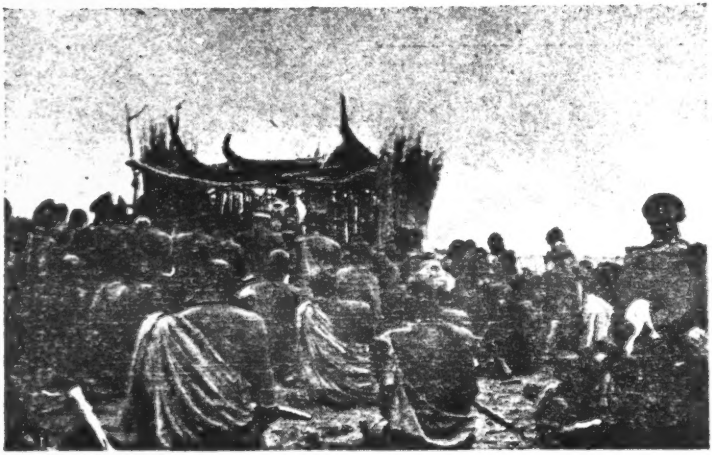

The Consecration

Note the fashions in hair-dressing. The soup-plate style is achieved by letting the hair grow long and stiffening it with clay

By courtesy of V. Rev. J. P. Kennelly

The Communion

Note the hair-style affected by the chap nearest the camera: little balls of red clay give this charming effect

Detwok Mission: Mass at Dêtwok village (Celebrant, Rev. Fr. Rowlands)

[facing p. 20]

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the roar of voices and the clashing of weapons might well make him apprehensive that he would soon find himself on the scene of a bloody battle between two rival villages. However, the reality would prove such fears unfounded, for he would merely discover that the dance was on, and that Shilluk youth was taking an afternoon off to enjoy itself. The Shilluk is fonder of dancing, we may suppose, than of anything else in the world. He will walk, or rather run and leap and jump, for miles to a place where dancing is to take place; and as he goes along he will lift his unmusical voice in raucous song, or give vent to blood-curdling whoops, springing high into the air and lunging with his spear at imaginary foes. Then for the next two or three hours he will bruise his great flat feet by pounding them on the ground, and yell himself hoarse, yet return home at the end of it not a bit less exuberant than when he set off. It may be the rainy season when the food stores are at their lowest level, and he will return home to a damp, fireless hut and an empty food bowl, but he does not mind; if he cannot eat and drink, at least he can make merry, and the dance will continue tomorrow and the day after too.

The day of his first dance marks a high light in the life of a Shilluk boy. Up to this he has been a wistful onlooker, a mere boy among other boys, whose occupation has been the minding of sheep and goats, the cleaning out of the cattle byre, the fetching and carrying for his betters; now, however, he has become as good as they are. He may dye his cloth as red and do up his hair as elaborately as they; carry real spears, not just some blunted cast-off a good-natured elder brother has given him; sit in council among his equals; take up his good new spear, if necessary, in defence of his village or his tribe.

On the day of the dance therefore, he attires himself with great care; his body shines with oil and is liberally powdered with red ochre; his hair is dressed in the way beloved of Shilluk youth; since 'tails' are *de rigueur* for these functions, he wears them: an antelope skin bound round his waist by a coloured sash with two strips of skin from the legs hanging

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down at the back; round his neck, instead of a white tie, he wears a collar of discs cut from the shell of an ostrich egg and a necklet of hair from the tail of a giraffe; his face is painted in some tasteful design in red, white and blue; his arms are loaded with all the beads he possesses or can beg, borrow or steal, and if he can fasten a large clanging bell to one elbow, he is extra pleased; his legs are cross-gartered with strings of metal shells, the size and shape of mussel shells, which give a most satisfying clashing sound when he moves; in his right hand he carries the three-foot long dancing stick of brown wood adorned at the top with two lugs of leather, in his left he grasps his dancing shield, a short, thick cylinder of ambach wood. Thus accoutred, he takes his beautiful new spear in the hand which holds the dancing stick, and with great pride sets out, surrounded by a bevy of admiring females, to join a number of his fellow dancers. Some of these are neophytes like himself, others have long since tasted the sweetness of the initiation dance, but all are picturesquely garbed and bedecked in the same way. In single file they proceed, running and yelling, leaping and whooping, towards the distant village where the drums are already beginning to throb and to which noisy throngs are converging from all sides. The girls follow on, no less excited than their brothers and sweethearts, and as they run along they give vent to their feelings in shrill ululations. They are more soberly dressed than the gorgeous males: an animal skin or a dark blue cloth is fastened on one shoulder and falls to the knees; they have anointed themselves with oil, put on their best beads, and perhaps smeared a little red dust on the top of their heads and touched up their faces with a little paint. Yet they need not worry that lack of charm or beauty will mean a lack of partners; if there are to be any wallflowers at the dance, they will be among the men, for every girl will have her beau. Nor need they have any misgivings about not knowing the correct steps; a leap upwards and backwards in time with the beat of the drums and a half turn to right and left with every dozen steps is all that is required. It is not grace of move-

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A Shilluk wearing a pair of ivory back-scratchers: a favourite adornment both useful and ornamental

Shilluk warrior in fighting pose

A Shilluk warrior poses against a peaceful background of cattle

Shilluk hair-styles: five 'soup-plates' in different stages of growth

Photos: Fr. F. Spalmuka

Shilluk warriors and Shilluk adornments

[facing p. 52]

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tending the hurts of the wounded. It seemed that the affair had ended; the boys began to creep back to school and we breathed freely again. The next morning, however, there was a fresh alarm. One of our Christians ran breathlessly into the mission and begged me to send at once to Kodok for assistance and to go myself to Pabiu to stop what might develop into a battle royal. It appeared that Alel was to hold a dance that afternoon and Pabiu was going to attend in force. To do so they must necessarily pass Detwok, and the braves of that village swore that they would do so only over their dead bodies, and that if they attempted it, Detwok would strew the road with their corpses. To this Pabiu joyfully replied that it would enjoy the task of putting Detwok in its proper place, under the earth, once and for all.

I immediately sent a runner to Kodok and after lunch, for if I was going to suffer martyrdom I thought there was no sense in doing so on an empty tummy, I went forth to try and keep the Pax Britannica till what time others, more competent, could arrive to enforce it. I went first to Pabiu, and found the warriors happily preparing for the dance. Faces were being carefully painted, bodies oiled and smothered in red dust, dancing skins being donned and all the paraphernalia so dear to the Shilluk heart and so essential to the Shilluk dance ready at hand; bells, shells, bracelets, beads, strips of gaudy cloth—anything indeed that could provide a riot of sound and colour; but I saw too that spears were being carefully sharpened and polished, and the large war shields not usually carried on the occasion of an ordinary dance had been brought out.

I approached the groups and received and returned the usual greetings. I asked them if there was a dance on and they replied that they were going to a dance at Alel. I pointed out that it would be more prudent if they stopped at home and that it was asking for trouble if they encroached on Detwok's territory. To this they replied that they were going to dance and that if Detwok wanted to start anything, that was Detwok's affair and not theirs. Then I went to the chief, and told him that I had sent to Kodok for police and that

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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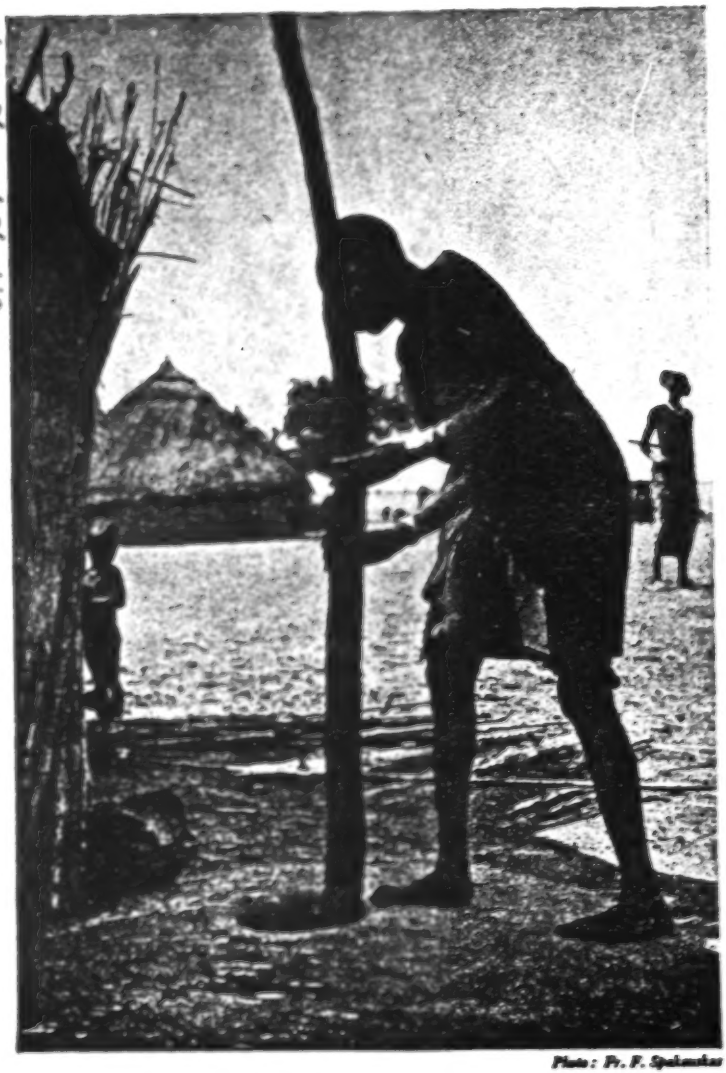

Photo: Fr. F. Spaimuka

Girl pounding grain as a preliminary to grinding

[facing p. 84]

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Photo: Fr. F. Spakmeler

A Shilluk putting the finishing touches to a spear-shaft

[facing p.85]